

## Switzerland : « All noisy on the Eastern front ! »

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**The Swiss foreign office has just published its status report on the contribution of Switzerland to the Eastern extension of the European Union (EU).**

In 2006, Switzerland decided to pour a billion francs to support to this extension. The project concerned ten new countries of the EU (2004) with a period of completion of 5 years and a period of realization of the projects which will end in June, 2017.

The Confederation approved two hundred and ten projects in all, with as essential criteria, the strength of Switzerland and the role that Swiss SMEs could play.

We notice in the whole of these projects a strong environmental (58 projects for 371 CHF millions) orientation, particularly energy efficiency (155 millions), public transports (69 millions) and water treatment (44 millions). It should also be noted that 145 millions (36 projects) will be dedicated to strengthen the Social and Health services and 25 millions francs in Economic growth support (48 projects). Finally, Switzerland wishes to help the new members of the EU to improve their security infrastructure and their judicial system (39 projects).

**Poland is the main beneficiary of this help with 489 millions, followed by Hungary and Czech Republic. The amount depends on the population of every country and on the per capita income.**

The help is not without benefit to Switzerland: 50 Swiss companies have already signed contracts in these countries for an estimated 500 millions francs.

This amount could seem derisory in that it represents only 0.5 % of the total of the European help given. It however has allowed to setting up of the establishment of very good relations with the countries concerned . It must be underlined that the implementation of these projects also contains the implementation of a system of control and follow-up to avoid any risk of corruption.

Sources : Swissinfo.ch et DFAE/DFE